

Message Text

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ACTION OES-09

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SPOP, ET
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH PRESSING GLOBAL
PROBLEMS -- POPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE FOOD PRODUCTION

REF: (A) STATE 197789 (B) STATE 107370

1. ETHIOPIA HAS IN THE PAST FEW YEARS BECOME ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST TRAGIC EXAMPLES OF THE FOOD BALANCE CRISIS, AND I INTEND IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE TO GIVE THE PROBLEM TOP PRIORITY IN MY DEALINGS WITH HIGH LEVEL ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS. ALREADY I HAVE SIGNED A \$4 MILLION AID PROGRAM FOR THE RESETTLEMENT OF SOME 7,000 FAMILIES FROM FAMINE RIDDEN AREAS IN THE VIRTUALLY UNINHABITED UPPER DIDESA VALLEY. WE ARE MOVING FORWARD IN THE HOPES OF BEING ABLE TO PLEDGE \$10 MILLION IN FY 78 OR FY 79 FOR THE FIRST OF TWO US BILATERAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WORLD BANK'S MINIMUM PACKAGE II AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM, ONE WHICH CALLS FOR A TOTAL INVESTMENT OF APPROXIMATELY \$92 MILLION FROM THE BANK, HOST COUNTRY, AND BILATERAL DONORS. EMERGENCY RELIEF PROGRAMS IN FY 78 HAVE ALREADY REACHED ALMOST \$6 MILLION OUT OF WHICH \$3.5 MILLION IS FOR FOOD.

2. NEVERTHELESS, IN THE SHORT RUN, THE FOOD PICTURE IS INDEED GLOOMY. THE RECENT FAO/OSR MULTI-DONOR MISSION HAS ESTIMATED
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THAT ETHIOPIA WILL DURING THE COMING YEAR HAVE A DEFICIT OF 350,000 MT OF CEREALS EVEN AFTER ANTICIPATED REGULAR COMMERCIAL IMPORTS OF 215,000 MT ARE DELIVERED. COMMERCIAL IMPORT REQUIREMENTS ARE, ACCORDING TO ANOTHER FAO EXPERT, EXPECTED TO RISE TO 500,000 MT WITHIN FIVE YEARS, A VIRTUALLY HOPELESS DRAIN ON ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES AND EARNINGS.

3. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE EQUATION, CONTROL OF POPULATION GROWTH, IS UNFORTUNATELY OF RELATIVELY LOW PRIORITY TO A GOVERNMENT WHICH SEES AS ITS FIRST TASK THE COMPLETION OF THE MARXIST-LENINIST REVOLUTION AND SUCCESSFUL MILITARY DEFENSE AGAINST ONE FOREIGN INVADER, I.E., SOMALIA, AND THE ERITREAN SECESSIONISTS, WHO HAVE BEEN FIGHTING FOR SOME 17 YEARS. THERE IS STILL NO OFFICIAL POPULATION POLICY. NEVERTHELESS, A BEGINNING HAS BEEN MADE, IN THAT GOVERNMENT ALLOWS A PRIVATE ASSOCIATION TO OPERATE A PROGRAM OF FAMILY PLANNING TRAINING WITH IPPF ASSISTANCE. FOR THE TIME BEING, WE BELIEVE THAT WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE BEST WAY TO CHANNEL U.S. ASSISTANCE TO THE CONTROL OF POPULATION GROWTH IN ETHIOPIA.

4. I WILL, IN ADDITION, LOOK FOR EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO PERSUADE ETHIOPIAN LEADERSHIP TO FOCUS ON THE NEED FOR THE NATION TO DEAL MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH POPULATION/FOOD PROBLEMS IN ORDER TO MEET BASIC NEEDS OF THE POOR. WE SHOULD, HOWEVER, BE UNDER NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR INTERVENTION, PARTICULARLY IN THE NEAR FUTURE, SINCE WE ARE JUST BEGINNING A TENTATIVE IMPROVEMENT IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. AT THE TIME REFTEL (B) WAS RECEIVED LAST APRIL, BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES WERE AT A NEAR IMPASSE. THREATS TO BREAK RELATIONS ENTIRELY WERE FREQUENT, AND THE GOVERNMENT HAD REFUSED ON POLITICAL GROUNDS, FOR ALMOST SIX MONTHS TO SIGN EVEN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED UPPER DIDESA PROJECT. FURTHER IT WAS DURING THE SAME MONTH OF APRIL THAT WE ABSTAINED ON AN CONFIDENTIAL

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IDA GRAIN STORAGE LOAN ON THE GROUNDS OF LACK OF PROGRESS TOWARD PROVIDING PROMPT, EFFECTIVE AND ADEQUATE COMPENSATION FOR NATIONALIZED AMERICAN PROPERTIES, ETC. MY OWN AGREEMENT HAD BEEN HELD UP FOR NEARLY THREE MONTHS. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHANCES OF GETTING OUR FOOD/POPULATION CONCERNS ACROSS TO TOP LEVEL LEADERSHIP WERE NIL. SINCE THEN RELATIONS HAVE IMPROVED SOMEWHAT AS EVIDENCED BY THE SIGNING OF THE FIRST NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT SINCE THE REVOLUTION IN 1974, I.E. UPPER DIDESA. WE HOPE THAT THE NEW DIRECTION WILL CONTINUE AND THAT THE USG CAN AGAIN CONTRIBUTE ON A BROAD SCALE TO MEANINGFUL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ETHIOPIA. AS CONFIDENCE GROWS, WE WILL HAVE BETTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE ON CONTROL OF POPULATION GROWTH. THE SECRETARY AND ADMINISTRATOR GILLIGAN MAY BE ASSURED THAT IT WILL RECEIVE MY PERSONAL ATTENTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT.
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